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I MEANING (意), NUMBER (數) AND BODY (體)

IN THE *LUN-HÊNG* (論衡)

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The *Lun-hêng* is a philosophical book written by Wang Ch'ung (王充27~?). The title of this book means "the balance of argument". The thought of Wang Ch'ung is deeply influenced by fatalism, and at the same time, involves criticism of the society of his age.

In this paper, I attempt to analyze the construction of the prose of the *Lun-hêng*. Wang Ch'ung says in the chapter, "Correcting views" (正說篇); "Characters (文字), when they have meaning (意), establish sentences (句). Sentences, when they amount to a number (數), become sections (章). Sections, when they form a body (體), become chapters (篇)". The concept of four steps (character, sentence, section and chapter) is not so unusual, but the recognition of three moments (meaning, number and body) between these steps is original with Wang Ch'ung. In order to complete a chapter, it is necessary for the writer not only to give meaning, but also to develop his writing logically and to substantiate it. The *Lun-hêng* itself

shows this kind of internal structure, which determines the style of Wang Ch'ung.

These three moments (meaning, number and body) are also found in the whole of the *Lun-hêng*. The *Lun-hêng* opens by expressing feelings (意) influenced by fatalism. (Meaning 意 means feeling also.) Soon after, this feeling of the author takes the form of logic. I consider this logic to be number (數). It acts as social criticism. Next, Wang Ch'ung reveals his own figure (body 體). We find him depicted as the defender of nation. Here, logic temporarily diminishes in importance, but after Wang Ch'ung has revealed his own figure, it appears again. This time, however, it does so as spiritualism. (Goodness is taken as best.) After this, feeling again becomes evident, as the author declares his wish of serving in the court.

In his last years, having experienced discouragement, Wang Ch'ung suggests a return to logic (數). We can recognize in this a spirit that has begun to work in a cycle.

II THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *FANG-TANG* (放蕩) AND THE STYLE OF WRITINGS OF THE SIX DYNASTIES

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Hsiao Kang (503-551), Emperor Chien-wen of the Liang Dynasty, wrote in a letter to his son that "literary writing should be *fang-tang* (unrestrained)." Since Hsiao Kang was an advocate of palace-style poetry, it was quite natural for critics of later generations to take this saying as Hsiao's literary view. But it was not unusual that these critics misunderstood the original meaning of Hsiao's remark. For example, Kuo Shao-yü (1893-) regarded this as the origin of the theory of "pornographic literature." The present article is intended to argue that terms of traditional literary criticism should not be treated in the context of their modern usage. For this purpose the following questions have to be explored and answered:

1. In what occasion did Hsiao Kang put forward the word *fang-tang*?
2. What was the meaning of *fang-tang* in the context of Six

Dynasties behavior and literature?

3. According to the understanding of that time, who were the writers that could properly be characterised as *fang-tang*? How did their contemporaries and later critics evaluate them?

Studies revealed that in the Six Dynasties, *fang-tang* referred to conduct which was beyond social norms and to writings that were not restrained by conventional rules, to those bold in making innovations, and ashamed to follow outmoded customs in form, language, and content. In this regard *fang-tang* can be treated as the *Zeitgeist* of the Six Dynasties. Hsiao Kang was an innovator of that time, and so it is quite natural that he, as leader of the literary circle, should have confirmed that "literary writings should be *fang-tang*." In fact, successful writers of all generations were all ambitious in innovation. If this ambition went a little too far, people would regard it, in the terminology of the Six Dynasties, as *fang-tang*. Tu Fu (712-770) once claimed that "until my lines are astonishing, never will I give up." This is undoubtedly an echo of Hsiao Kang's advocacy of *fang-tang*.

III THE MATERIALIZATION OF *HSI-YU-CHI* (西遊記)

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Hsi-yu-chi (西遊記) consists of two main motifs, one of which is from Chinese myth. Hsüan-tsang (玄奘), having crossed a river on the last leg of his trip, looked back and found his own body floating on the water. This means that his body had died and his spirit arrived at the other world, which is identified with Mt. K'un-lun (崑崙) surrounded by Jo-shui (弱水) or deep water. This mountain is considered to be the place where human beings return after death. Hsüan-tsang's followers, such as Sun Wu-k'ung (孫悟空), a monkey, and Chu Pa-chieh (豬八戒), a pig, are regarded as guides to the other world as well as animals that are believed to dwell in Jo-shui. Ancient people realized that world through their own religious experiences. Therefore Hsüan-tsang's arrival at that world also means that he reached the sphere of deliverance with his followers helping him to do it.

The other motif is from Buddhism. The destination of Hsüan-

tsang's trip was Mt. Ling-chiu (靈鷲), a paradise in Buddhist belief. He entered Nirvana there after his death, which also means he attained deliverance. The roles of the animals as his followers were to guide him to paradise and at the same time to help him attain deliverance. These two motifs permeate the *Hsi-yu-chi* in close association.

It is Sun Wu-k'ung that plays the most active part in the *Hsi-yu-chi*. Thus when we investigate the materialization of *Hsi-yu-chi*, we should pay particular attention to the communal worship of monkeys. Some groups of people worshipped monkeys as their ancestors and at festivals they would often be possessed by their spirits. They illustrated these experiences in stories of monkeys guiding them to the other world. Also, at Buddhist temples the monkey is worshipped as a protector of Buddhism and is considered a guide to paradise or to deliverance. These two different aspects, one regarding the monkey as an ancestor of a community and the other regarding it as a protector of Buddhism, mingled with each other and brought forth the original *Hsi-yu-chi* around the T'ang (唐) dynasty. Later, Hsüan-tsang's trip to India, which was a historical fact, was introduced into the story. This trip is the third, but less important, motif. The literary texture of the *Hsi-yu-chi* was gradually enriched in the course of time, until the story reached its complete form in the Ming (明) Dynasty.

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